National Science Test Results

Department of Education

News Releases

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Nova Scotia students have performed as well overall as their counterparts across Canada on national science assessments, according to results released today by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada.

The report of the 1999 School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP) Science Assessment, released in Ottawa today, also shows stronger performance by Nova Scotia 16-year-olds as compared to 1996.

"I am pleased to see that Nova Scotia science students are doing as well as their peers and have improved since 1996," Education Minister Jane Purves said. "However, we should do better, and we are making science education a priority to ensure we do."

The 1999 assessments were based on a sample of 2000 Nova Scotia Anglophone students and 300 Nova Scotia Francophone/Acadian students at the ages of 13 and 16. Students were tested in the spring of 1999 on general knowledge of science and on inquiry skills.

The results allow comparisons with students in all Canadian jurisdictions, as well with students who took the test in 1996. The report shows that:
- Overall, Nova Scotia students performed as well as their counterparts across Canada.
- Overall, Nova Scotia students performed as well as students who took the test in 1996.
- Sixteen-year-old Anglophone students in Nova Scotia demonstrated significant improvement over 1996. Performance of 13 year-olds was similar in 1996 and 1999.
- Sixteen-year-old Francophone/Acadian students performed well in comparison to 1996 and in comparison to the rest of Canada. However, 13-year-olds did not perform as well as expected - similar to the performance of counterparts in other minority French - speaking populations.

Ms. Purves said the Department of Education has been introducing a new science curriculum in recent years for both English and French students, and this will continue to be a priority. This includes new resources and curriculum implementation at both the junior and senior high levels.

"We look forward to future SAIP science assessments to track the effectiveness of this curriculum," said Ms. Purves.

Across Canada, approximately 31,000 students, aged 13 and 16, from

all provinces and territories, were tested. About 22,600 completed the assessment in English, and 8,400 in French.

The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada began the national School Achievement Indicators Program in 1993. Nova Scotia has participated in administering mathematics in 1993 and 1997, reading and writing in 1994 and 1998, and science in 1996 and 1999.

The analysis of the results will lead to further discussion among the provinces and territories about what are appropriate expectations for student achievement in science.

FOR BROADCAST USE:

Nova Scotia students are doing as well in science as other Canadian students, and seem to be improving.

National test results released today show Nova Scotia 16-year-olds did better on the tests in 1999 than they did in 1996.

Nearly 31-thousand students, aged 13 and 16, from all provinces and territories were tested in the spring of 1999 on general knowledge of science and on inquiry skills.

The School Achievement Indicators Program is run by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada.

Education Minister Jane Purves said that the results are good, but she would like to see more improvement.

The Department of Education is making science education a priority in the curriculum.

A sample of 2000 English and 300 Nova Scotia Acadian/Francophone students took the test in the spring of 1999.

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Contact: Cathy Shaw
Department of Education
902-424-3757
E-mail: shawcm@gov.ns.ca

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